

Organizing Your Neighborhood

After a major emergency or disaster, emergency response agencies could be overburdened and might not be able to get to your neighborhood immediately. You and your neighbors or coworkers may need to take the initial emergency response actions and take care of others for at least 72 hours. Past disasters have thrust many untrained people into positions of providing first aid and rescuing people. You need to be prepared!

If a response team has not been organized in your neighborhood or workplace, form one now. Joining and forming a community response team can greatly improve your chances of surviving a disaster and can improve the self-sufficiency of your neighborhood.

Training

- ☐ Learn simple firefighting techniques.
- ☐ Learn basic search-and-rescue skills.
- ☐ Learn to assess yourself, your family and coworkers for injuries.
- ☐ Learn to assess your home and workplace for hazards or damage.
- ☐ Learn to assess your community for hazards, needs and available resources.

Contact your local police and fire departments, city/county Office of Emergency Services, American Red Cross chapter or community college to arrange for speakers and training workshops. Response teams should arrange to participate in annual disaster exercises sponsored by local government and businesses.

Inventory Your Neighbors' Skills

As part of the community response team planning process, teams should conduct an inventory of the skills and resources available at home, work and community. You should have this information on hand before a disaster for efficient, effective responses.

Identify people who:

- Have medical, electrical, child care, leadership, firefighting and survival skills.
- Own chain saws, citizens band radios, four wheel drive vehicles, motorcycles and water purifiers.
- Are willing and able to be a runner/bicyclist to deliver messages if telephone lines are down.

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**Be Smart
Be Prepared
Be Responsible**

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Every home or office has people with special needs. Your neighborhood response team should work with these individuals in advance to determine what extra assistance or supplies they may require after an emergency. Some of the people who may require special assistance include:

Physically Challenged

- Deaf or hearing impaired
- Blind
- Limited mobility — wheelchair-bound
- Persons who require a special oxygen supply
- Persons with significant medical conditions

Other

- Children who spend time alone at home
- Non-English speaking

Store Supplies

In addition to the water, food and other supplies that everyone needs to stock, members of the community response team should store tools. Items such as the following should be stored in a central and easily accessible location.

- ☐ Gloves and goggles
- ☐ Adjustable wrenches
- ☐ Hard hats and vests
- ☐ Flashlights with extra batteries
- ☐ Axes and crowbars
- ☐ Ropes

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